

# Pennsylvania Department of Health Oral Health Basic Screening Survey



During the 2021-2022 academic year 4,234 third-graders in 74 schools across Pennsylvania participated in an oral health Basic Screening Survey (BSS).

The BSS is a no-touch oral health assessment conducted by a dental professional.

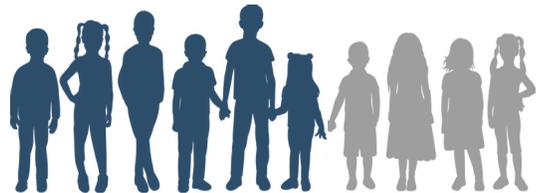
The findings provide insights into oral health disparities present in Pennsylvania. These data suggest that social, environmental, and demographic factors are important determinants of preventable oral diseases.

Six in ten Pennsylvania children in both rural and urban areas have a cavity by the time they reach third-grade.

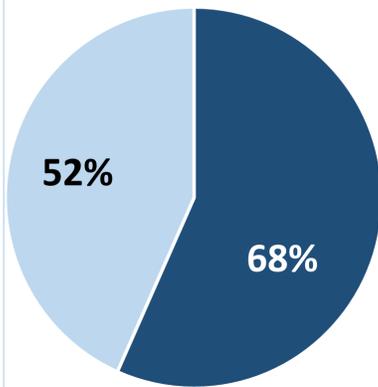
**Unaddressed cavities impact whole-child health and may result in:**

- chronic pain
- problems eating
- problems sleeping
- missed school
- academic challenges

**6 in 10**



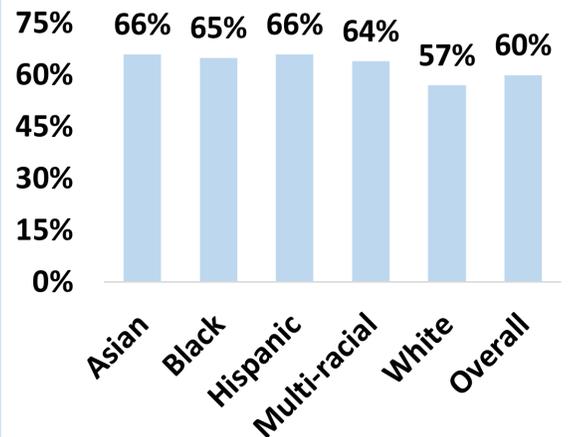
## Cavity Rate by NSLP



Pennsylvania schools where 50% or more of the student population are considered low-income and eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) have a higher cavity rate when compared to schools with less than 50% NSLP eligibility.

- Schools With 50% or More of Students Eligible for NSLP
- Schools With Less than 50% of Students Eligible for NSLP

## Cavity Rate by Student Race and Ethnicity



## The Way Forward

Findings from the BSS help inform and improve Pennsylvania oral health policies and programs. The Oral Health Program focuses on:

- Community water fluoridation
- Routine oral cancer screenings
- Oral hygiene practices by parents and children
- Improving access to dental health services
- School sealant programs for children in families with low income
- Assessment of oral health status of the Pennsylvania population

**For more information:**

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